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INDIA-PAKISTAN: Second Phase of Border Agreement

India and Pakistan yesterday agreed to withdraw troops from two additional areas where they had massed during the border confrontation in January. The agreement does not address the issue of either side's troops in Punjab. The first phase of the withdrawal, in Kashmir, ended on 20 February.

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Comment: The positive tone of last month's meetings between Prime Minister Gandhi and President Zia in New Delhi and the orderly completion of the first phase of the troop withdrawal have paved the way for additional pullbacks. The new agreement allows New Delhi to keep Army troops in Punjab in order to support local police and paramilitary protection for Hindus and moderate Sikhs threatened by extremists. Islamabad has repeatedly called for bilateral confidence-building measures and almost certainly will press New Delhi to follow up its proposal on reducing border tensions.

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